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AFGHANISTAN

FIRST PERSON Volunteering for a Brighter Future

A university professor gives back to his district by working in a new community center



Photo: USAID/RLS-I

“My life has had many difficulties. I can feel what youth go through and this is why I am working to develop their skills for the future.”

— Wafa Rahimi, a volunteer at the new Surkh Rod Community Center (seated far right)

Wafa Rahimi is a professor at Kabul University. Recently, he took on a second job volunteering part-time in his home district at a new community center in Surkh Rod, Nangarhar Province.

“I am proud to have a critical role in the development of my community,” said Rahimi, who will work at the center as much as he can when he is not teaching. “I can share my experience and knowledge, which gives me a great role and responsibility in our district.”

The Surkh Rod Community Center is one of six centers recently opened and funded by the USAID Rule of Law Stabilization Program – Informal Component (RLS-I). Three centers serve Nangarhar Province in Jalalabad City and Surkh Rod and Behsud districts; three centers serve Kandahar Province in Kandahar City and Arghandab and Dand districts. The centers provide public outreach activities, access to computers, technical skills training, as well as a meeting space for community groups.

Rahimi said he was drawn to the center because he believes that working with youth will promote peace in Afghanistan. When young people have the opportunity to gain skills and education, with support from elders in their community, they are more likely to embrace pursuits that lead to a more peaceful, prosperous future for Afghanistan.

“I am continuously motivated by teaching young people,” he said. “Having a community center invigorates my spirit. We can work there with youth so that they study and learn to be good citizens of the district.”

Rahimi and more than 60 other volunteers began their work at the Nangarhar and Kandahar centers with training by RLS-I public outreach staff. The volunteers are not paid a salary for their commitment.

RLS-I equipped the centers with furnishings, office supplies, and computers. Staff training will be on-going, with RLS-I outreach staff introducing volunteers to new materials and programs for the community.

“I am not the only volunteer,” Rahimi said. “I have many others who stand along with me, committed toward development of Afghanistan through these centers in my district.”